

Assynt Community Council

28 February 2019

Lochinver Village Hall

7.30pm

Minutes (Approved 28th March)

1) Present:

K Anderson (KA), M Hutchison Chair (MH), P Jones (PJ), R Kerr (RK), L Taylor (LT), J Thomas (JT)

Others Present:

K Currie (Highland Council) (KC) via Skype, W Jack (Assynt Development Trust) (WJ) and 1 member of the public

MH explained that KC had asked to participate by Skype for environmental reasons. Due to intermittent broadband KC was forced to resort to mobile phone.

2) Apologies:

V Ling (VL), D Slator (DS)

3) Expressions of Interest:

None.

4) Minutes of January Meeting and Matters arising:

Matters arising were as follows:

- **7 ii Parking outside the Surgery and the Caberfeidh:**

PJ has passed on Graham Mackenzie's email to KC who in turn has contacted Technical Services. To date there is nothing new to report.

- **11 Toilet Closures Update:**

MH recently attended meetings with Scourie and Kinlochbervie Community Councils then with William Gilfillan (WG) to discuss the sale of Kylesku toilet. Rodney Macleod of Kylesku confirmed this particular toilet is sited on land owned by the local Grazings Committee so any sale has to be cleared with them. One suggestion was that the Assynt Development Trust might take it on, but currently there is no sign of the property being advertised for sale. WG is still keen for a community takeover but it was made clear this is not an option. All public conveniences will remain open for the foreseeable future but there was a suggestion HC might have to start charging clients for the use of certain facilities.

There have been no further developments regarding the Achmelvich toilets.

Action: MH to continue progressing with particular attention to Achmelvich.

- **10) Community Services iii Stoer Old Cemetery Flooding**

Work on alleviating this problem has now been completed free of charge by Charlie Cowan. There is still a problem of sheep gaining access through a damaged wall and it was suggested this be addressed next.

Action: MH to check with Alex Dickson for the name of the contractor who repaired the cemetery wall at Nedd.

Action: PJ to sent a note to Charlie Cowan thanking him for his help.

- **11) AOCB i Dog Poo**

It was agreed the situation has become even worse in the village - in part due to a small number of persistent offenders. One option is to highlight each incidence of dog fouling by painting each deposit with

high-vis biodegradable paint to bring the wider community's attention to the extent of the problem.

It was also suggested the new police officer might be asked to speak to those individuals involved on an unofficial basis given that the Dog warden rarely visits the area. In the meantime Andy Shaw has agreed to get the local street cleaner to monitor the situation.

KC added that responsible dog ownership is due to be discussed at the Scottish Parliament.

Action: LT to look at obtaining high-vis biodegradable paint.

Action: PJ to add as an agenda item for March.

- **7) iii Lochinver Bottle Bank**

PJ has informed Andy Hume of the ACC's decision not to relocate the existing bottle bank.

- **9) Tourism Tax**

PJ has informed Durrant Macleod of the ACC's support for this proposal given that he originally raised concerns regarding this issue.

- **10) ii Traffic Lights**

The fault has now been fixed.

- **10) iii Electric Vehicle Charging Points**

LT reported there are now four charging points in place awaiting connection to the electric grid.

- **11) i Pre-school Transport Allocation**

MH has contacted Lynn Ross, Local Transport Officer, regarding the options available for transporting a pre-school child to the locals school. It is legally not feasible to instruct any bus driver to take on the responsibility for any unaccompanied four-year old child so the matter currently cannot be resolved.

- **11) iv Ice Plant**

Tony Usher has confirmed HC intend demolishing the old ice plant once funding becomes available. HC is also looking to relocate the aerial masts to another site but this is proving a protracted process.

LT pointed out that the proposed transmitter on the hill above the Inver Lodge will overcome the need for the existing aerial cluster.

- **11) v ADT Update**

WJ reported that applications for funds from Transport Scotland will go some way to obtaining a total of 19 electric bikes. Individuals will be able to rent or loan a bike with a view to eventual purchase.

As a result of requesting planning permission for the 'Cludgie Project' it has come to light that rainwater from the roof of the Leisure centre is currently being directed into their septic tank. This problem will have to be resolved before Scottish Water can allow grey water from camper vans to be processed.

LT proposed the draft minutes be approved and RK seconded.

5) Financial Report:

KA gave the latest figures: Business Current acc - £154.22 and Instant Access acc - £8481.41

7) Correspondence:

i PJ had already forwarded an email from Historic Assynt to all councillors and another personal one from Dave McBain (Chair of Historic Assynt) objecting to an item in the January minutes regarding their planning application for a walkway at the broch in Clachtoll.

Historic Assynt felt that the way the matter had been reported in the minutes was a gross misrepresentation of their actions. It had been suggested by one council member that the ACC should have arranged a meeting to allow further public consultation regarding this planned development given that HC invited a response. Historic Assynt pointed out that 10 public meetings have already taken place and letters were sent to every household in Assynt on the electoral role inviting them to attend each one. The final design for the walkway was presented at the last two public meetings and the proposal was accepted by 22 votes in favour to 2 against.

It was agreed an apology be placed on record, given that the information included in the statement made by the community councillor who raised this particular issue was incomplete and liable to raise questions regarding the integrity of Historic Assynt's actions. MH pointed out that she is reluctant to say anything more on this issue when the opposing views seemed to be coming from two members of the same organisation - Historic Assynt. MH stated that she doesn't know anything about Historic Assynt's procedures or constitution and didn't feel that ACC had a further role at this point.

ii PJ had also forwarded a detailed email to the councillors received that afternoon from Brigid Benson requesting a letter of support for her application for funds. Her aim was to organise a project allowing volunteer participants within Coigach and Assynt to participate in a Circle exploring their Outer and Inner Landscapes. Having read through her proposal, a vote was taken and the request declined by 4 votes to 1 with one abstention.

Action: PJ to reply on behalf of ACC.

iii Phil Tomalin has contacted the ACC with a reminder that Community Council elections are due to take place on November 20th. Any unfinished business should be cleared before that date.

iv HC have also contacted the ACC regarding buildings insurance cover. In future local community councils are required to liaise directly with Zurich Insurance as HC are no longer allowed to act on their behalf. However, any premium payments made will be reimbursed by HC as part of their grant.

v MH has received more information from George Farlowe regarding the recycling bins at Ullapool which were subsidised by the town's Harbour Trust. Andy Shaw is of the opinion that providing bins will often encourage fly tipping once these bins are full - as seen recently at Achmelvich Beach car park. Visitors are less likely to leave litter if there is no bin close by that is due to be emptied.

JT pointed out that the local street cleaner has been instructed to monitor the situation. The problem only arises during the summer months but recycling should be encouraged more widely. It was suggested the ADT and ACC might consider supplying two recycling bins within the village for the coming tourist season. This might kick-start a wider awareness of the problem and go some way to reducing litter overall.

Action: MH to look at the provision of a bin in the main car park in Lochinver similar to the ones in Ullapool. It might be possible sometime in the future to invite local businesses to pay for more bins.

vi MH been informed the glass recycling bins at Kylesku are to be taken away because they keep getting blown over. It was felt it would make more sense to secure these bins where they are currently located rather than move them away completely.

vii KC emailed her monthly report.

The main points were as follows:

County committee actions:

Christmas lighting – how do local councils put up and take down their Christmas lights.

Police report – still a high number of folks driving with no seatbelt and drink driving is still an issue.

Single Use Plastics/Climate change:

The working group has identified the first step is to get the council's own house in order including

their own travel and use of resources.

Looking to remove all single use plastics from HQ and encourage other places in the council to do the same.

Flooding:

Public drop-in sessions have already been planned in the east with practical advice and help from the Scottish flood forum. The same can be organised in Lochinver and surrounding area.

Community Planning Partnership:

Work has begun on a food project where we can roll out the work being done in the east coast villages to the whole of the county.

The family nurse partnership is starting in the autumn throughout the county to support young and vulnerable families. NHS Near Me is also being rolled out and is becoming more and more useful to folks

Poverty Alliance Transport Consultation:

A meeting is due to be held in Lairg to hear the voices of people who live or in the county in relation to transport. The meeting will specifically be about rural transport and will be hosted by Oxfam and the Poverty Alliance. More details can be circulated when available.

Geopark:

KC is due to meet with the Geopark/Biosphere March 1. Update soon.

Highland Council Budget Process:

KC has argued through the meetings that increasing harbour dues and fish export licenses was a bad idea, given the uncertainty over the UK leaving the EU. Also, removing money from the education budget without fully understanding why schools are over-allocating provision was a bad idea. But KC was assured that this was done with the agreement of the head teachers. Concerns were also raised that revised rules for waste collection and civic amenity sites would possible jeopardise people using the dumps and we would see an increase in fly tipping.

Through amendments to the budget the following were agreed by the full council:

1. School meal costs are being frozen instead of a 5p increase. The saving will instead be realised by efficiency within the catering service.

2. £10k extra to each ward discretionary budget.

3. Highlife Highland to be funded adequately to ensure subscription is kept at inflation rate, rather than original administration's £1.6m cut which could have ruined the HLH scheme.

4. Instead of £354k there will now be a £119k cut to educational support services, protecting Educational psychology posts and BSL teaching and support staff.

These priorities have been agreed by cutting elsewhere:

1. Implementing the measures contained in the Deloitte report that went to the Redesign board

2. Infrastructure - efficiencies in project management structure.

3. ICT - reprofiling of less critical IT functions.

JT explained that she and LT organise the Lochinver Christmas Lights each year. They are funded by local public contributions and are put up by volunteers incurring no cost to HC.

It was agreed it might be in order to invite the Scottish Flood Forum to visit Assynt.

8) Response to Planning Applications:

None.

9) Response to Muirden Energy Presentation:

It was agreed the ACC should consider inviting Muirden Energy to give a public presentation sometime soon. Members of the local community should also be encouraged to come up with suggestions on how any windfall payments might be spent. Currently Assynt is one of the few community councils that does

not benefit from such payments and given recent widespread HC budget restrictions, consideration should be given to the benefits of such a project.

Action: PJ to add to April agenda.

10) Community Services:

i Winter Road Maintenance

To date there has been no feedback from Tracey Urry in response to the meeting held last month.

KA pointed out that the local gritter drivers feel they are being unfairly victimised by the ACC. But the ACC's concerns lie with the current working practices stipulated by HC and the timetabling.

PJ has already made it clear in the latest ACC sidebar printed in the Assynt News that the local gritter drivers have our full support.

11) AOCB:

i Concerns were raised about the state of some of the local roads - particularly the sinking surface at the Culag Bridge.

LT has already been informed by Technical Services that this is not an issue. But any other concerns, such as potholes or raised iron works should be reported to the Service Point.

The poor condition of Glencanisp Road was also discussed but the main section beyond the Manse is a private road.

ii WJ gave a brief update on the Assynt Development Trust's latest activities.

- The Housing Survey is now complete.
- Following on from discussions related to the Community Asset Transfer of sites around Lochinver, the ADT has applied to the Scottish Government for 'Making Places' Community Led Design funding in order to run a number of charette style workshops. These would help identify community aspirations for preferred development options for various sites in Lochinver.
It was suggested representatives from various organisations linked to this project be invited to attend two ACC meetings in April (Lochinver) and May (Drumbeg).
- Representatives of the ADT, ACC and Crofters Trust will be meeting on March 1 to share information on their latest projects.

The meeting closed at 22.00

The next meeting will take place on Thursday 28th March at Elphin Community Hall at 19.30.

PJ March 2019

Contact us here - assyntcc@gmail.com

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or visit our website - <http://www.assyntcommunitycouncil.org.uk>

Proposed dates for all other 2019 ACC meetings (subject to change):

April 25	Lochinver Comunity Hall	May 30	Drumbeg Village Hall
June 27	Lochinver Village Hall (including AGM)	July	<i>no meeting</i>
August 29	Lochinver Village Hall	September 26	Rhu Stoer Hall
October 31	Lochinver Village Hall	November 28	Lochinver Village Hall
December	<i>no meeting</i>		